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~ Wikia Search Debut Off ~ OLPC America In 2008! ~ 'Journey of Dreams'!

-\* Red Hat Open Source Committal \*-  
-\* Video Game Growth Seen To Be Slowing \*-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard  
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

One week it's cold and snowy, the next it's warm enough to be Spring!  
Ya gotta love this New England weather! It was nice to not have to get  
bundled up every time I wanted to head outdoors for some reason.

It's been a slow week for news on all fronts. That's typical for this  
time of the year, though. Slow on the personal front, as well. I've  
been feeling a little lethargic lately, but that's probably due to an  
early case of "cabin fever". I just haven't felt like doing too much  
around the house, or even work too much with some of my hobbies. Time  
to break out of that mode!

Remember I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that I got an Atari Flashback  
for the holiday? And it wasn't working properly? Well, I did manage to  
get it replaced finally - great to play the old version of Asteroids  
after all these years! And some of the other 2600 games! It's tough  
getting used to a 7800-like controller, but I'm managing!

With that bit of nostalgia to consider, I'll close out this week's  
commentary. I was going to mention a few things on the political front,  
but I caught myself and thought better of it!

Until next time...

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
joe@atarinews.org

Editor's note: Due to the sparse amount of messages in the Atari  
newsgroups this week, there will be no People Are Talking column this  
week.

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

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## Video Game Growth Seen Slowing

U.S. video game industry sales growth is expected to slow in 2008 as accelerated demand for software is tempered by a decline in hardware revenue, the Consumer Electronics Association said Saturday.

Overall U.S. industry sales are seen rising to \$17.9 billion in 2008, up 13 percent from an estimated \$15.8 billion in 2007, the CEA said. That compares with a 22 percent increase from 2006 to 2007.

The expected decline in growth comes as the industry moves beyond the initial phase of the introduction of new gaming consoles made by rivals Microsoft Corp, Sony Corp and Nintendo Co Ltd.

Microsoft's Xbox 360, launched two years ago, competes against Nintendo's Wii and the Sony PlayStation 3 consoles, both on the market for just over one year - for dominance in a global video game industry thought to have approached \$40 billion in revenue in 2007.

Video game industry hardware sales jumped 50 percent to \$6.6 billion in 2007, but are anticipated to shrink to \$6.4 billion in 2008.

Now that all of the major consoles are established, hardware sales are expected to moderate, while demand for related software is expected to jump, as game owners beef up their libraries of new titles.

"Software (in 2007 had) phenomenal growth, riding the wave of hugely successful title launches such as (Microsoft's) Halo 3, (Activision Inc's) Guitar Hero III and (Electronic Arts Inc's) Rock Band. In fact, the focus for 2008 will be in the software category, where CEA estimates a 26 percent increase in sales over 2007," said CEA spokeswoman Jennifer Bemisderfer.

Software sales are expected to rise to \$11.5 billion in 2008, up from \$9.1 billion in 2007. That was a 7.6 percent increase from 2006, the CEA said.

The CEA released the data ahead of the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this weekend, when Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, Sony Chief Executive Howard Stringer and others are expected to give glimpses into the future of their gaming products.

## 'Journey of Dreams' Is Nightmare To Play

After a 12-year slumber, ethereal jester NiGHTS returns to the Nintendo Wii in NiGHTS: Journey of Dreams, a nightmare adventure doomed by frustrating controls. The last time this franchise made an appearance, Sega was still in the console business.

NiGHTS centers around a pair of 12-year-olds who suffer from recurring nightmares. The duo, Will and Helen, discover all their dreams take place in an alternate dreamworld called Nightopia. Teaming up with NiGHTS, the two work to save Nightopia from Wizeman, a powerful dreamworld entity.

Light music and softer visuals set a soothing, dreamy tone. As you enter various game levels, the colors grow more vibrant and the music picks up the pace, almost awakening you for the adventure ahead.

After your first flight, however, you'll wish you went back to sleep. Each level is essentially a series of linear races that must be finished before the clock runs out. You can use a power boost to pick up speed when you fly through a series of rings. Missions range from side-scrolling flights to third-person jaunts.

Sega presents multiple options to maneuver NiGHTS as he floats through the winding levels, all of which are awkward. Motion controls are absolutely horrible. NiGHTS uses a similar control mechanic as Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass for the DS. You move your character by guiding an object - in this case, the Mindsight - that your character follows.

Motion controls aren't responsive. Actions as simple as a loop require you to slowly move the Wii remote in a circle, which isn't helpful when battling against a clock. You can add the nunchuk to control NiGHTS with a joystick, but it only helps slightly. I had to resort to using Wii's Classic Controller to make the experience more palatable.

NiGHTS boasts a solid mix of levels and objectives, yet none of them are challenging. Two-player mode is slightly more interesting. You can either race players online and offline, or take on a friend in an offline duel. There's also a Dream Mode, which allows you to create your own dream realm using items collected throughout the game. You can then share your world with other players online.

Fans of the original game on Sega Saturn may get wrapped up in nostalgia, but Wii owners in search of a quality third-party title will be sorely disappointed.

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## OLPC Considering 'Give One, Get One' Offer in Europe

Europeans interested in the One Laptop Per Child Project's XO laptop may soon have the chance through a "give one, get one" offer similar to that offered in North America last year.

"At some point we might do it in Europe," said Walter Bender, OLPC's president, in an interview Friday.

Under the "give one, get one" program offered in Canada and the U.S., customers could buy an XO laptop for \$400 and a second XO laptop would be donated to a developing country. Each XO laptop currently costs around \$188.

OLPC hasn't yet made the offer available in Europe because the XO has not received the necessary certifications to be sold there. "We haven't finished all that stuff, so we couldn't do it in Europe yet," Bender said.

Whether or not OLPC does make the XO available in Europe remains to be determined, and such an offer remains under consideration. "We may or may not do it," Bender said

From OLPC's perspective, the "give one, get one" offer helped large numbers of people in North America get involved with the group's efforts to bring computing to children in developing countries, Bender said.

"A lot of people [are] jumping in to the software, to learning and support....That's what I was hoping Intel would do, but they didn't. The public is doing it instead," he said, referring to Intel's acrimonious departure last week from OLPC's board of directors.

OLPC has so far shipped around 50,000 XO laptops to North American customers under the "give one, get one" program, and more remain to be shipped, Bender said. The number of customers who ordered laptops under the program was not immediately available, but as many as 150,000 units may have been donated through the program.

## OLPC America To Launch In 2008

The One Laptop Per Child Project (OLPC) plans to launch OLPC America in 2008 to distribute the low-cost laptop computers originally aimed at developing nations to needy students in the United States.

The group, which was formed in the U.S. by teachers from MIT, came under criticism shortly after forming because its original mission did not include the United States.

Originally, the aim of OLPC was to develop a \$100 laptop for kids in poor nations to ensure they don't miss out on the benefits of computing, and to make sure developing countries don't fall further behind modern nations due to their inability to buy computers, a conundrum commonly referred to as the "digital divide."

OLPC America already has a director and a chairman, and will likely be based in Washington D.C., said Nicholas Negroponte, chairman of OLPC, in

an interview.

"The whole thing is merging right now. It will be state-centric. We're trying to do it through the 50 state governments," he said.

The decision to launch OLPC America came about due to three considerations.

"For one thing, we are doing something patriotic, if you will, after all we are and there are poor children in America. The second thing we're doing is building a critical mass. The numbers are going to go up, people will make more software, it will steer a larger development community," Negroponte said.

The third reason is educational so that children in the United States communicate with kids in developing nations and expand their horizons.

The reason OLPC had not included the United States in its low-cost laptop program was because of the huge difference in need, Negroponte said. In the United States, people spend \$10,000 per year per child in primary education, but in Bangladesh, a developing country, they spend \$20. It's a huge difference, and many people in the United States can afford more expensive laptop PCs for their kids anyway.

But although the United States was not the focus of OLPC in the beginning, it has always been in the plans.

"To have the United States be the only country that's not in the OLPC agenda would be kind of ridiculous," Negroponte said.

#### Slim Apple Laptop Expected at Macworld

As the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas winds down to lackluster reviews, Apple is expected to grab the spotlight with an ultra-slim laptop computer and online movie rentals at its biggest annual show next week.

The new products are seen more as enhancements to Apple's current offerings rather than ones that pack the "wow factor" of last year's star attraction, the iPhone.

Next week's annual Macworld event in San Francisco is the favorite venue of Apple Chief Executive Steve Jobs to roll out new products and chart the company's course for the year.

His showman-like pronouncements also increasingly set the agenda for the computer and electronics industries, and have in recent years overshadowed CES, held in Las Vegas around the same time.

Apple gives no hint of what will be announced, so guessing what Jobs has up sleeve is a favorite pastime of analysts and industry executives.

Analysts expect a computer half as thick as Apple's current MacBook lineup, but using flash memory chips like those found in its iPod music players rather than a hard drive.

"The energy seems to be around a smaller-form-factor laptop computer,"

said Charles Golvin, an analyst with Forrester, a market research firm.

Notebooks have been one of Apple's strongest segments. In its fourth fiscal quarter ended last September, the company sold 1.34 million MacBook and MacBook Pro laptops, up 37 percent from a year earlier.

"What I'm guessing we might see from Apple is something a little more recognizable as a MacBook device, as a derivative of a laptop or tablet rather than a cool new form factor that sits between laptop and mobile phone," Golvin said.

Many also think Jobs will announce that customers will be able to rent downloaded movies from Fox, Warner Bros and others through its iTunes online store, a move that could shake up the \$9 billion U.S. movie rental market.

"I think the rentals are a bigger deal," said Shaw Wu, an analyst with American Technology Research. "Apple has just simply not served that market yet and I think that's going to open up a whole new revenue opportunity."

Anticipation that Jobs will wow everyone with groundbreaking new products tends to drive Apple stock higher in the days ahead of Macworld, but can set shares up for a fall if the new products don't live up to expectations.

Although Apple shares, dragged down by mounting fears of a U.S. recession, have fallen about 11 percent since topping \$200 on December 26, they rose 4.8 percent on Wednesday to \$179.40.

The shares rose 8 percent the day Jobs unveiled the iPhone at last year's Macworld and have risen more than 90 percent over the past year on bullishness over sales of iPhones and Macintosh computers, which have been gobbling up market share.

And Apple has fared better than other computer companies such as Dell Inc, which has fallen 15 percent since the start of the year, and Hewlett-Packard Co.

"Apple's still going to be one of the better names to be involved in in the tougher environment. The product cycles are so strong," said Wu, who has a price target of \$210 on Apple shares.

Many industry analysts see the polished message of Macworld as a welcome relief from the chaos of CES and its familiar parade of ever-larger televisions, sharper video cameras and slimmer cell phones.

"Apple didn't need to take thunder from CES, there was nothing to take," Michael Gartenberg, an analyst with Jupiter Research, wrote on the company's blog.

#### Red Hat CEO Says Committed to Open Source

Red Hat's new chief executive said on Friday that the company will continue to pursue a business model under which it makes its software available at no cost and makes money selling services to businesses.

"We are a mission-based company. Democratizing information is a social good," Chief Executive James Whitehurst said in an interview with Reuters. "We will be open source. We will be the leader in open source."

Last month he was named CEO of Red Hat, the world's largest publicly held developer of open source software.

Open source software makers invite the public to help in developing their computer programs, using the Internet to collaborate.

Proponents argue that this collaborative approach results in the creation of programs that are superior to software from companies such as Microsoft Corp., which keep their code secret and generally require customers to pay a license fee for each piece of software in addition to fees for any services.

But Red Hat's approach also gives rivals the ability to copy and resell its products.

Oracle Corp., the world's No. 3 software maker, started distributing a copycat version of Red Hat Linux in 2006 and offering support at prices that it at least initially said were cheaper than those of Red Hat.

A group of software developers have collaborated on a second copycat version of Red Hat's product, known as CentOS, that is available for free download over the Internet.

While it is unclear how much business Red Hat has lost to Oracle or CentOS, analysts say the emergence of those products shows that open-source companies are constantly vulnerable to new competitors with low barriers to entry.

In addition, Red Hat faces fierce competition from Microsoft, which is launching a new line of rival products next year.

Also, Red Hat's existing customers are free to keep using the software once their service contracts have expired.

"There are frustrations with any model. It's part of the greater good," Whitehurst said. "It's easier to copy what we do. We are not going to win by providing better bits. We are going to win by providing better service and better value."

He said that businesses seek out Red Hat's products partly because the company has the most expertise in its field.

"Hemingway could talk better about his work than somebody who could just copy it," he said. "The same is true about software. We are built around core values about being open and being collaborative ... We are enabled to provide better value because it is part of our culture."

Whitehurst resigned as chief operating officer at Delta Air Lines Inc. last year after he lost a succession contest for the post of CEO to another executive.



A company that sells Internet domain names is facing criticisms for holding some in reserve as a consumer-protection measure, a move that also prevents interested parties from shopping around for better prices.

After weeks of testing, Network Solutions LLC began this week to grab names that people search for on its Web site but don't immediately register.

The name is locked up for about four days, during which the person who made the search can buy it directly from the company for \$35 a year - a few times more than what many of its rivals charge. After that, the name returns to the pool and can be registered by anyone through any registration company.

Spokeswoman Susan Wade said Network Solutions was trying to combat domain name front running - the use of insider information to snatch desired domain names before an individual or business can register them.

But what it's doing shares similarities with the practice the company says it is trying to prevent, which the Internet's oversight agency for domain names already is investigating.

One blogger termed Network Solutions' action "deplorable."

"They actually think they are doing customers favors with this little dirty trick," wrote Jay Westerdal, president of Name Intelligence Inc., which analyzes domain name patterns. "These guys are clueless!"

Wade said the company was making adjustments in response to feedback but considered its measure a benefit for customers - by preventing domain name speculators and others with questionable intentions from grabbing the name first.

"We are not front running," she said. "We are not monetizing the page. We have no intent in keeping it. We have no intent in selling it in secondary markets at inflated prices - that is front running."

In October, the Security and Stability Advisory Committee of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers launched a probe into domain name front running and likened it to a stock broker buying or selling shares ahead of a client's trade, in anticipation of a movement in price.

The committee said the practice isn't necessarily prohibited under current regulations but could dampen the domain name industry's image within the Internet community.

### Defending Anonymous Speech Online

The controversy surrounding a fake MySpace account that allegedly drove 13-year-old Megan Meier to commit suicide in October 2006 is raising new questions about the use of pseudonyms and false identities on social networking sites.

The news that federal prosecutors in Los Angeles have asked a grand jury to investigate possible violations of federal wire fraud and cyberfraud laws in the case has sparked widespread debate about the appropriate balance between anonymous speech and potentially criminal activity.

At a press conference last month, Missouri prosecutor Jack Banas said that his office was unable to prove that the false MySpace account was set up with the intent to harm Megan Meier, and as a result, there were no charges that could be filed against the alleged perpetrators.

Kurt Opsahl, senior staff attorney for the EFF (Electronic Frontier Foundation), said that there is a long history of anonymous speech in the United States, stretching all the way back to the Federalist Papers in 1787. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay wrote the Federalist Papers under the pseudonym "Publius" to advocate ratification of the United States Constitution, which was in danger of being rejected by New York state.

"If a prosecutor can maintain a case against a citizen who is merely using a pseudonym online, without more, it can have a chilling effect on free speech," Opsahl argued. "People can and should be responsible for their online actions, but one should address the actions, not the pseudonym."

Over the years, the Supreme Court has strongly supported the concept of anonymous speech, describing it as "a shield from the tyranny of the majority."

"It thus exemplifies the purpose behind the Bill of Rights," the Supreme Court wrote in 1995, "and of the First Amendment in particular: to protect unpopular individuals from retaliation... at the hand of an intolerant society."

With the rise of the Internet, however, new attacks are being levied against anonymous speech. Corporations and even some local governments have been particularly aggressive about pursuing anonymous bloggers who post critical comments about them. Just last month, for instance, the EFF helped quash a subpoena seeking the identity of a New Jersey blogger who criticized his town for filing a malpractice lawsuit against its former attorney.

Opsahl said it is important that the scope of the Los Angeles grand jury's investigation be limited. "Even if a theory of fraud against [MySpace] is viable, it should not impose any burdens on Web sites," he said. "A Web site would remain free to allow pseudonyms."

According to the EFF, a number of recent state and federal decisions have been handed down that protect anonymous speech on the Internet. Most recently, the Arizona court of appeals protected the identity of an employee who forwarded a copy of an e-mail he accidentally received that his company's CEO had originally sent to the CEO's mistress. In reaching its decision, the court applied a balancing test between the company's alleged need for the information and the individual's right to anonymity.

#### "Spam King" Indicted In Stock Fraud Scheme

A federal grand jury in Detroit has indicted a Michigan man dubbed the "spam king," and 10 others, in an international illegal bulk e-mailing and stock fraud scheme, the U.S. Justice Department said on Thursday.

The 41-count indictment charges Alan Ralsky, 52, of West Bloomfield,

Michigan, his son-in-law, and nine others with operating an spamming operation that focused on running a stock "pump and dump" scheme.

"Today's charges seek to knock out one of the largest illegal spamming and fraud operations in the country, an international scheme to make money by manipulating stock prices through illegal spam e-mail promotions," U.S. Attorney Stephen Murphy said in a statement.

Under the scheme, the group sent spam touting thinly traded Chinese penny stocks, drove up their stock price, and reaped profits by selling the stock at artificially inflated prices, the statement said.

The Detroit Free Press said prosecutors described Ralsky as one of the most prolific spammers in the United States.

According to the indictment, the Ralsky's group used various illegal methods in order to maximize the amount of spam that evaded spam-blocking devices and tricked recipients into opening, and acting on, the advertisements in the spam.

The indictment followed a three-year investigation. Investigators estimate that those charged earned approximately \$3 million during the summer of 2005 alone as a result of their illegal spamming activities.

Three people have been arrested, including Ralsky's son-in-law Scott Bradley and How Wai John Hui, a dual national of Canada and Hong Kong. The others, including a Russian national, still are being sought, the Justice Department said.

The Detroit News reported that Ralsky was believed to be in Europe and quoted his attorney, Philip Kushner, as saying Ralsky would voluntarily surrender to federal authorities in the next few days.

"Mr. Ralsky intends to fight these charges, which are brought under a new federal statute that has not been interpreted by the courts," Kushner told the paper.

#### 'Hacker Safe' Geeks.com Hacked

Geeks.com, a Web site that still displays a banner from McAfee's ScanAlert certifying that it is "Hacker Safe," on Friday sent a letter to customers saying that it was hacked last month.

"Genica dba Geeks.com ('Genica') recently discovered on December 5, 2007 that customer information, including Visa credit card information, may have been compromised," said a letter posted on The Consumerist from Jerry L. Harken, Genica's chief of security, to an undisclosed number Geeks.com customers. "In particular, it is possible that an unauthorized person may be in possession of your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, credit card number, expiration date, and card verification number. We are still investigating the details of this incident, but it appears that an unauthorized individual may have accessed this information by hacking our e-commerce Web site."

Geeks.com has reported the incident to federal authorities and Visa, and is encouraging customers to review their credit card statements for unauthorized charges. The company has set up two help numbers -

1-888-529-6261 or 1-212-560-5108 for non-US customers - that will be active starting on Tuesday for those with questions about the incident. It is also providing contact information for the major credit agencies to make it easier to report any identity theft fraud arising from the incident.

Geeks.com describes itself as a direct-to-consumer e-commerce site that specializes in computer-related excess inventory, manufacturer closeouts, and popular and esoteric products for the tech-savvy.

A customer sales representative for Geeks.com confirmed that such a letter had been sent out but declined to offer further comment.

McAfee acquired ScanAlert in October and describes it as the world's leading provider of e-commerce Web site security services. The Hacker Safe certification, McAfee explains on its Web site, lets "shoppers of ScanAlert customer sites instantly know that they are a secure Web site and respond by buying more from them."

The ScanAlert Web site explains that the Hacker Safe certification doesn't mean 100% safe. "Research indicates sites remotely scanned for known vulnerabilities on a daily basis, such as those earning 'Hacker Safe' certification, can prevent over 99% of hacker crime," the site says.

A spokesperson for McAfee did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

#### Many Disappointed by Wikia Search Debut

The long-awaited and much-hyped Wikia Search, a project of Jimmy Wales' Wikia empire, launched on Monday to a chorus of jeers from Web 2.0 advocates and search experts.

Wales, the cofounder of Wikipedia, had expressed optimism for a community-built search engine that could beat Google by allowing people to provide context, content, and ratings that no computer algorithm could match.

"Search is part of the fundamental infrastructure of the Internet," Wales wrote on the Wikia Web site. "And we are making it open source. Wikia Search will start to change search from being proprietary, top-down, and closed."

The results delivered Monday didn't quite live up to expectations. A Wikia search for "George Bush" yielded as the top result "George Bush is a Crackwhore!" and several Bush joke sites. The top hits on Google, by contrast, were two Wikipedia articles and the official White House site.

When Business Week did a test search for "Abraham Lincoln," three of the top four results were for schools named after the president, while on Google the top result was ... a Wikipedia page.

On the TechCrunch blog, Michael Arrington called the alpha launch of Wikia Search "one of the biggest disappointments I've had the displeasure of reviewing." He said Wikia was "barely a search engine at all," and added that "the search results are poor and thin" and "absolutely no one

is going to use this to search the Web, until (and if) it is greatly improved."

Arrington said that Wikia boasts hardly any of the much-touted human aspects. The only personal aspects to the service is a profile, to which users can add keywords, and user-written mini-articles, which are displayed at the top of relevant results pages. While each result has stars for user ratings, a la Amazon and Netflix, those stars "don't actually do anything yet," according to a pop-up message.

Wikia Search's poorly executed rollout doesn't mean the concept of human-aided search isn't legitimate, Greg Sterling, principal analyst with Sterling Market Research, said in a telephone interview.

"There are a lot of companies looking at this," Sterling said. It's an approach to the basic problem of search: getting the right results to the right people. And the holy grail of search is delivering an actual answer to a query, not just high-quality pointers to sources.

The biggest problem with Wikia Search might be the way Wikia promoted it before launch. "They created a lot of expectations directly and indirectly and what appeared yesterday was very disappointing," Sterling said. Wales' "very vocal criticism of search and Google's black-box approach built up those expectations," he added. While eight to 10 companies are working on similar ideas, Sterling said, "this is not any kind of a threat to Google in any way."

Arrington had stronger words for Wales. "It's time for Wales to be quiet, let this thing evolve or not, and eventually let the software do the talking," he wrote.

Wales did do some talking on TechCrunch, emphasizing that Wikia Search is a "project to build a search engine, not a search engine. We've been telling everyone that constantly. I'm sorry Michael's disappointed, but having said that, we didn't build it for him, but for people who think that openness, transparency, and participation are more important than slick releases."

#### Vendors Look To Ease Recycling Costs On Users

Major vendors including Hewlett-Packard, Dell, and Sony are working together to push through a legislative mandate in the United States that will make it easier for users to recycle their consumer electronics.

The mandate calls for companies to cut consumer electronics recycling costs and to make their reuse and recycling the highest priority when manufacturing products, panelists said during a talk at the International Consumer Electronics Show, in Las Vegas.

The cost to consumers of recycling products, including things like collection fees, is high, the panelists said, and some manufacturers have taken advantage of weak recycling laws to manufacture products that cannot be effectively recycled or reused.

Some companies have standards in place to manufacture products that are easy to recycle, but others hope to drive down their own costs by adopting lower production standards, the panelists said.

A legislative mandate would create a level playing field for manufacturers, said Tod Arbogast, director of sustainable business at Dell. A common approach to designing for recycling will promote the production of products that can be recycled and drive down manufacturing costs through effective product design and distribution.

As an example of what can be done, Sony's new OLED (organic light-emitting diode) TV is designed to be disassembled by common household tools, said Douglas Smith, Sony's director of corporate environmental affairs. It is a step toward making products that can be easily recycled, he said.

To be effective, recycling processes will be needed to convert used components back to original raw material for other products, followed by reuse or resale. Production costs can be cut through recycling and reusing materials rather than extracting and processing raw materials, said Dell's Arbogast.

"There are significant economic benefits in doing so as well as significant environmental benefits, which I think are often forgotten," Arbogast said.

HP is adopting standards to recycle printers with plastic that doesn't convert to raw material, said Renee St. Denis, director of recycling at HP. The end-of-life resale value of printers after seven to 10 years of usage is minimal, but the high cost of plastics versus other printer components has made the company come up with innovative reuses of those plastics, she said.

Dell already follows a Texas state law that requires PC manufacturers to dispose of products as easily as they are placed in the market, Arbogast said. The company accepts used Dell PCs for free via mail, Arbogast said.

Sony is taking full responsibility for the products it manufactures - cell phones, TVs, and other devices - by offering the ability to recycle them at no cost, Smith said.

In March, Sony will launch a program in the United States where consumers can recycle consumer electronics for free by dropping them off at locations within a 20-mile radius of any SonyStyle store. Though the company has only 55 SonyStyle stores in the United States, the company hopes to expand the effort by involving its distributors and other companies.

Sony takes full responsibility for products it manufactures and has already recycled a giant TV screen belonging to the city of Tampa Bay for free, and the company wants to deliver the same recycling ability to users, said Smith.

#### More Takeout Orderers Are All Thumbs

Big restaurant chains are rushing into what could be the future of takeout and delivery food: text ordering.

Leading the way are the pizza giants. Papa John's is airing national TV spots to promote the text ordering that it launched in November.

Domino's has offered mobile ordering - which requires cellphone Web access - since July. Pizza Hut is about to start promoting both text and mobile ordering.

Quiznos, Dunkin' Donuts and Subway have looked into text ordering. McDonald's is testing it in Seoul. Starbucks tested it in London and at one U.S. store.

Papa John's CEO Nigel Travis compares the potential to online ordering, which accounts for 20% of Papa John's sales. "Text is the way forward," he says. He predicts it will account for 3% of sales within two years.

The potential pool of users is huge, considering Americans already send 30 billion text messages a month. Noah Glass, founder and CEO of GoMobo.com, predicts texting could account for 25% of all food takeout orders within the decade.

Consumers have to give up something for the convenience. "What they get from you is scary: your personal digits," says Jeff DeGraff, business professor at the University of Michigan. "I don't give many people my cellphone number. It's the last firewall of privacy."

Text ordering is huge in parts of Asia and Europe. Some think, however, that Americans may be slower to embrace it, as they have been with PC ordering. "You'll have to see online ordering take off before text ordering does," says Sherri Daye Scott, editor of trade journal QSR Magazine.

On tap in text ordering:

- \* Papa John's. Consumers wanting to text orders must first visit Papajohns.com and set up a list of four favorite meals. Each then is represented by a cellphone digit that is used to order. Promotions will include TV spots during the National Football League playoffs.

- \* Domino's. A mobile Web order service was launched in July and now is available at about 65% of its stores, says Rob Weisberg, vice president of precision marketing.

He wouldn't give mobile's share of sales, but he says it has enabled Domino's to capture 1 million cellphone numbers, to which it sends promotions about once a month. "Within three years it will be as common to use a text order as it now is to use the phone."

- \* Pizza Hut. The chain will launch its "Total Mobile Access" service this month, says Bob Kraut, marketing chief. Consumers can text orders with their cellphones or use cellphone mobile Web access to order. "It will be a competitive advantage to offer both."

The future for text ordering is huge, says University of Michigan's DeGraff. "Within five years, it will be as common as online orders."

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